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By NICHOLAS HUBA • STAFF WRITER • May 8, 2010

SURF CITY — Rep. John Adler, D-N.J., saw first hand the toll that the busy winter storm season took on local beaches.

Adler met with local officials and walked the borough's battered beach Saturday morning.

"I came here last year, and it looked completely different," Adler said as he walked along the beach between 19th and 24th streets in the borough. "After the winter that we have had, it shows the importance of beach replenishment."

Surf City Councilman Peter Hartney said the southern end of the borough fared better than the northern end during the storm season. Hartney was joined on the tour by Long Beach Township Mayor Joseph Mancini, Harvey Cedars Mayor Jonathan Oldham and Ship Bottom Mayor William Huelsenbeck.

"Because we did not get all of the easements in the north end of the borough, the (Army engineering) Corps had to taper the beach, and that has caused us to lose more sand in that area," Hartney said. "The southern end has held up very well."

The borough went through the beach replenishment project in 2007. The project constructed a dune with a top elevation of 22 feet above sea level with a 300- to 400-foot-wide berm, depending on the location of the beach on the island, 8 feet above sea level.

Despite the damage caused by the storms, Adler still considers the project a success.

"Surf City is one of the success stories," Adler said. "If this sand was not here it could have been a different story."

The damage from the storms could have been worse if not for the project, Hartney agreed.

"If this sand was not here, it would have much worse," Hartney said.

Work for the second section of the project is currently under way in Harvey Cedars and is expected to be completed by mid-June, Army Corps of Engineers officials have said.

Adler said that he continues to work with local and state officials in order to help municipalities get the easements needed for the next section of the project, which is expected to be in Long Beach Township.

"We are always talking to both state and local officials about the project," Adler said. "I understand people's constitutional rights; this is a project that benefits everyone and we need to protect that."